



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES

I. Introduction and Overview

The Community Participation Program describes the methods by which the City of Avondale Estates officials will engage the public in developing a Community Agenda. It also presents a schedule of activities and benchmarks for that process.

Involving a diverse set of stakeholders in the planning process will help ensure that the Community Agenda reflects the values of the City's citizenry. Meaningful involvement by informed constituents will also validate the Community Agenda as a community-endorsed public policy document used to guide future land-use decisions. When many members of the community participate in establishing the Community Agenda, they lend support to city officials to implement the policies established within the document.

Review Process

Prior to the development of a Community Agenda, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that the local jurisdictions transmit the Participation Program along with a Community Assessment for review. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional arm of DCA that reviews these two documents to determine whether or not they are complete; upon this verification, ARC in turn transmits these documents to DCA. DCA conducts a report of findings and recommendation, and ARC issues the local government a final report that includes DCA's comments.

Public Participation in Recent Planning and Development Activities

The City of Avondale Estates has experienced a great deal of recent activity involving community meetings and planning charrettes related to growth and development issues facing the City.

Avondale Estates Downtown Master Plan. In 2004, City officials hired consultants to prepare a Master Plan for revitalizing its historic core. The Master Plan followed the principles of the Livable Centers Initiative program, which includes a heavy emphasis on community-based visioning. During a nine-month period, a citizen's Task Force worked with consultants and conducted workshops and



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community meetings with 200 to 300 participants to draft the Master Plan and implementation strategy. An additional character preference survey was conducted with 155 respondents.

Avondale Mall Annexation Request and TAD. In 2005 Wal-Mart requested that the City of Avondale consider annexing the property it purchased to develop a mixed-use project anchored with a super-store. A series of public meetings and hearings were held throughout 2005-2006. While the City ultimately denied the request, community members mobilized and worked with officials to create a set of 36 points that DeKalb County officials promised to require Wal-Mart's project to respect or incorporate. In 2005, the County had approved a Tax Allocation District (TAD) for the Avondale Mall/Columbia Drive area in an effort to attract private development to the economically struggling corridor. The TAD process also involved a series of public involvement activities. An unofficial community web-site continues to monitor the progress of this project.

Downtown Redevelopment Proposal. Throughout 2006, several work sessions and public hearings were conducted for the community and City Board and Mayor to consider a major re-development proposal to implement pieces of the Master Plan from a private developer. Citizen comments are documented and available on the City's official web site.

Lake Master Plan. In Fall 2006, City officials decided to hire a consultant to create a Master Plan for Lake Avondale. The plan will encompass the park site along with immediate neighborhood surrounding this strategic City resource. Several sets of community meetings will be conducted during 2007 to develop the plan.

Conclusion. Given the recent and up-coming set of public engagement activities, the City of Avondale will ensure that the Comprehensive Plan does not duplicate these efforts, but instead will build upon the community's past and pending investment of time and energy. The program for engaging the public in the Comprehensive Planning thus will focus on a re-affirmation of that prior work (or re-orientation as appropriate), and expand elements as necessary to meet DCA requirements. The City wishes to ensure that the Lake Avondale planning efforts remain focused and are not confused with the Comprehensive Plan, but will



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incorporate appropriate results of the Master Plan into the Comprehensive Plan itself. This may involve an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, depending on the timing of adoption.



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II. Stakeholders List

- Community Groups / Neighborhood Associations
 - Lake Advisory Board
 - Avondale Arts Alliance
 - Avonwood Homeowners Association
 - Avondale Condominium Association
 - Avondale Education Association (Jill Joyner Bush, Kate Stubbs)
 - Historic Preservation
 - Avondale Tree Board
 - Avon Garden Club
 - Avondale Estates Garden Club
 - Avondale Women's Club
 - Avondale Estates Retirees
 - Avondale Community Club
 - Avondale Swim & Tennis Club
 - Boy Scouts (affiliated with First Baptist Ch)
- School Leadership (Principal, PTA)
 - Avondale Elementary
 - Forest Hills Elementary
 - Avondale Middle
 - Avondale High (Principal Michael Worthington)
 - International School
- Church Leadership
 - First Baptist
 - Avondale Patillo Methodist
 - Clarendon Road Baptist
- Downtown Development Authority
- Avondale Estates Business Association
- Businesses through Chamber of Commerce
- American Legion



III. Participation Techniques

The City of Avondale Estates has established a Steering Committee to oversee the Comprehensive Planning process and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and Mayor on the final product.

Given the series of recent, related public planning activities identified above, the Steering Committee will determine how many community meetings should be conducted.

Education/Information

Lobby Displays –	<i>Post maps and information at City Hall.</i>
Printed Information –	<i>Flyers and Newspaper information will be distributed; flyers were mailed to all citizens announcing the first public hearing.</i>
Website –	<i>A web link has been created on the City web page with draft documents and draft documents.</i>
Media and Press Releases –	<i>The local newspaper will be contacted to advertise meetings and/or status of the plan to the community.</i>
Mailing Lists –	<i>The City of Avondale Estates has a mailing list and Steering committee members have emailing lists for announcing events and status.</i>

Public Input

Meetings/Hearings –	<i>Two required public hearings will be held; at least one Work Session before the Board will be conducted where progress to date will be presented, and; in addition, at least 2 community meetings will be held that includes the interaction techniques below.</i>
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Website –

*The City of Avondale Estates **created a web link on** its main web page to solicit public input and provide information to the citizens about the Comprehensive Plan process, progress, and schedules of activities.*

Public Interaction

Vision, Goals,
Objectives Meetings -

Facilitated meetings to determine answers to three major planning questions: Does the vision articulated in your existing Master Plan still seem appropriate? What additional objectives does the community identify for the City? What Issues and Opportunities exist for the community to achieve goals and vision?

Public Partnership

Steering Committee
Meetings –

The first meeting was convened December 20, 2006 and another was held scheduled January 10, 2007. Regularly scheduled meetings will be held so this group can provide feedback and advise the planning team

Technical Advisory
Committee/Task Force –

Established only if it is determined that specific community objectives need special study and analysis.



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IV. Comprehensive Plan Schedule of Events

The Steering Committee will work with the Board of Commissioners and Mayor to establish exact dates for public meetings, considerate of other community events and activities. These dates will be published in the local newspapers and posted on the City official web site. The following identifies the sequence of events to occur through March 2007.

	October	November	December	January	February	March
Community Assessment						
Data Collection						
Data Analysis						
Existing Land use						
Areas Req. Special Attention						
Character Areas						
Quality Community Objectives						
Supporting Data						
Public Hearing #: JAN 17						
Transmit Documents to DCA						
Community Participation Plan						
Draft Document						
Steering Committee Meetings						
Public Meeting #1:						
Public Meeting #2: Mar 14						
Community Agenda						
Future Development Map						
Future Development Narrative						
Short Term Work Program						
STWP update						
Public Hearing #2						
Transmit document to DCA						